

## THE CARTAGENA SUMMIT ON A MINE-FREE WORLD.

### **RWANDA PRESENTATION BY ANDREW KAYUMBA.**

I would like to start by congratulating the President Susan Echeberry and the Colombian government for organizing such an excellent Summit in Cartagena.

Today, I have been authorized by my country to declare that Rwanda is now land mine free.

The landmine problem in Rwanda dated as far back as the 1990 to 1994 liberation war with additional landmines laid during the 1996 to 1998 insurgency war in the north of the country. As a response to this problem, the Rwandan National Demining Office (NDO) was established in April 1995 and entrusted with the tasks of coordinating all demining activities, proposing policy and strategies on mine related issues to the government, maintaining a national data base, providing information for mine action activities and developing and supervising a sustainable, comprehensive and integrated mine action plan for Rwanda

In 2001 22 of the 32 located mined areas were cleared but Rwanda urged for government and non-governmental organisations to support them. A further 17 minefields were located and a re-training program arranged at the International Mine Action Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. To date a total of 230 NDO personnel have been trained and they followed the International Mine Action Standards.

Through various survey efforts in the period 1995 and 2006 a total of 52 mined areas were identified.

These 52 mined areas represented a total of 1,946,754.5 (one million, nine hundred forty-six thousand, seven hundred and fifty four, point five) square meters of area in which antipersonnel mines were known or suspected to be emplaced. This work has culminated in the destruction of 660 antipersonnel mines, 29 antitank mines, and 2,034 UXO, as indicated in the completion report we will be submitting to the President and the Cartagena Mine Free Summit. These areas have been addressed through survey and clearance efforts which have been made possible with the support of a number of donor countries and international organizations such as Mines Awareness Trust the UK Department of International Development and Norwegians People's Aid.

Hundreds of kilometres of commercial roads have been re-opened, tea plantations cleared from anti-personnel mines, factories reopened, several commercial centres cleared and reopened, farmland cleared, agricultural activities resumed, casualty figures reduced through intensive mine risk education efforts, more than 600,000 people resettled without fear of being killed

As a result of efforts undertaken since Rwanda submitted its initial transparency report, Rwanda is today proud to declare that it has fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention by having determined that there are no longer areas under

the jurisdiction or control of the Rwanda in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced.

In the event that previously unknown mined areas are discovered after this date, Rwanda will continue fulfilling its information submission obligations under Article 7 and will inform the States Parties of these new areas during Meetings of the Standing Committees. It will also ensure that it meets its obligations of excluding civilians from these areas and destroy all mines in these areas as a matter of urgent priority.

### **Conclusion**

Let me take this opportunity to declare Rwanda a mine-free state as far as the completion of the identified minefields is concerned. This is one year ahead of our treaty obligation deadline of December 2010, and this makes Rwanda the first state in the Great lakes region to be mine-free and meet her obligation.

Thank you for your attention.